

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 231210Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3585

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: "TIME" AND "ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY" INTERVIEW SANJAY GANDHI

SUMMARY: BILL SMITH OF "TIME" MAGAZINE HAS JUST PASSED TO US A COPY OF A JAN 8 INTERVIEW HE HAD WITH SANJAY GANDHI TO BE PUBLISHED IN PART IN NEXT ISSUE OF "TIME". A RECENT "ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY" SANJAY INTERVIEW APPEARED ON THE NEWSSTANDS IN BOMBAY JAN 22. BELOW IS A SUMMARIZED ACCOUNT OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF BOTH INTERVIEWS. THEY REFLECT SANJAY'S HARD-LINE POSITION ON THE EMERGENCY AND PRESS RESTRICTIONS; HIS RESULT-ORIENTED NON-IDEOLOGICAL VIEWS ON ECONOMIC POLICY; AND HIS INTENTIONS TO MOBILIZE THE ENERGY OF INDIAN YOUTH BEHIND NATION-BUILDING ACTIVITIES. COPIES OF BOTH INTERVIEWS ARE BEING POUCHED TO NEA/INS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMERGENCY: SANJAY TIED THE EMERGENCY'S DURATION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWENTY POINT PROGRAM WHICH HE ANTICIPATED WOULD BE COMPLETED "BY NEXT YEAR." HE CRITICIZED PAST FAILURES TO ACTUALLY IMPLEMENT ANNOUNCED PROGRAMS AS "HOAXES" AND COMMENTED, "IF THE EMERGENCY WERE LIFTED, THE PROGRAM WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE LIFTED, AND AGAIN THIS

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WOULD CONFIRM THE HOAX; BUT IF WE KEEP THE EMERGENCY UNTIL WE

COMPLETE THE PROGRAM, WE THEN GO TO THE POLLS, WE CAN SAY, 'NOW WE HAVE COMPLETED THE PROGRAM AND REMOVED THE EMERGENCY, AND YOU CAN JUDGE US BY THAT.'" (TIME)

2. SANJAY STRONGLY DEFENDED THE EMERGENCY IN BOTH INTER-VIEWS. HE CHARGED WESTERN COUNTRIES WITH ADOPTING DOUBLE STANDARDS IN RESPECT TO INDIA AND THEMSELVES, POINTING TO THE LACK OF CRITICISM OF BRITISH RESTRICTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND OR THE USE OF TROOPS AND DOGS TO HANDLE RIOTS IN THE UNITED STATES. "...IF WE BROUGHT OUT TROOPS HERE THERE WOULD BE HOLY HELL IN THE AMERICAN PRESS," (TIME) HE SAID. REFERRING TO THE USE OF TROOPS IN U.S. COLLEGE CAMPUSES HE REMARKED, "...WE COULDN'T USE TROOPS IN SUCH CASES; AND IT (DEMOCRACY) IS SUPPRESSED ENOUGH IN THE U.S. THAT YOU CAN PUT TROOPS IN CERTAIN PLACES WITHOUT THE PUBLIC SAYING ANYTHING." (TIME) HE ASKED IF THE USG WOULD TOLERATE A SITUATION "... WHERE THE OPPOSITION TOOK IT ON THEMSELVES TO CATCH HOLD OF THE ELECTED MEMBERS OF TPI ASSEMBLY, AS THEY DID IN GUJARAT, AND BEAT THEM UP UNTIL THEY RESIGNED, AND BURN DOWN THEIR HOUSES?" (TIME)

3. SANJAY CLAIMED THAT "THE GREATEST GAIN (OF THE EMERGENCY) IS A SENSE OF DISCIPLINE AND THE SPEEDING UP OF WORK. I COULD GIVE A LONG LIST OF FIGURES OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS ON ALL POINTS--FROM THE LOWERING OF PRICES TO INCREASE IN PRODUCTION. THIS RATE OF PROGRESS WAS UNIMAGINEABLE A YEAR AGO. WHAT HAS THE COUNTRY LOST? SMUGGLING, BLACK MARKETING, HOARDING, BUS BURNING AND THE HABIT OF COMING LATE TO OFFICE." (IW) HE REMARKED "THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT DECLARE THE EMERGENCY TO STRENGTHEN HER BASE, WHICH IS ACKNOWLEDGED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD". (IW)

4. ECONOMIC POLICY: SANJAY REITERATED HIS BIAS AGAINST SOCIALIST CONTROLS STATING "I DON'T FEEL YOU SHOULD THROTTLE EITHER THE STATE-OWNED OR THE PRIVATE SECTOR. YOU SHOULD LET THEM RUN IN COMPETITION WITH EACH OTHER, AND LET THE BEST ONE WIN, YES, I THINK THERE ARE TOO MANY CONTROLS ON THE STATE-OWNED COMPANIES; AS LONG AS YOU ARE USING A FAIR CRITERION, YOU SHOULD JUDGE THEM BY THE BALANCE SHEET ALONE." (TIME) "MANY OF OUR LAWS AND RULES HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CAUSED DELAYS AND GIVEN OPPORTUNITY FOR DISHONESTY. THEY ALSO INCREASE PAPERWORK." SOUNDING SOMEWHAT LIKE CHINA'S TEN HSIAO-PING, SANJAY SAID "I BELIEVE IN WHATEVER WORKS. IF THE PUBLIC SECTOR HELPS THE COUNTRY GROW, I BELIEVE IN THAT. LIKewise FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN BOTH." (IW)

5. FOREIGN PRESSES "THE FOREIGN PRESS HAS USUALLY BEEN

ANTI-INDIAN. MANY OF THEM ACCUSED US OF STARTING THE WARS
AGAINST PAKISTAN." (IW)

6. DOMESTIC PRESS: "SLANDER WAS THE ORDER OF THE DAY IN THE
INDIAN PRESS. THEY CONSTANTLY TOLD BLATANT, MALICIOUS LIES.
CENSORSHIP WAS THE ONLY WAY TO PUT AN END TO THIS. ANY
LAW MUST APPLY EQUALLY TO FOREIGN JOURNALISTS. EVEN WITH
CENSORSHIP THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT TOLD THE PRESS WHAT
THEY SHOULD WRITE--ONLY CERTAIN MATERIAL WAS CUT OUT. BUT
BEFORE CENSORSHIP, WEREN'T MOST JOURNALISTS TOLD BY THEIR
BOSSSES WHAT TO WRITE? COULD THE NEWSPAPERS PUBLISH ANYTHING TO

THE CONTRARY? ISN'T THIS A FORM OF CENSORSHIP?" (IW);
AND "CERTAINLY WE'VE GOT AN INDEPENDENT PRESS. I THINK THERE
IS MUCH LESS CENSORSHIP HERE THAN THERE IS IN MOST COUNTRIES
OF THE WORLD." (TIME)

7. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES: "SOME CHANGES ARE NECESSARY. IF
ANY LAW OR ARTICLE COMES IN THE WAY OF DEVELOPMENT AND
PROGRESS, IT MUST BE CHANGED. I AM IN FAVOR OF ANY CHANGE
THAT WILL SPEED UP WORK AND BENEFIT THE AVERAGE CITIZEN."
(IW)

8. CONGRESS PARTY: "THE FUTURE OF THE CONGRESS IS THE
FUTURE OF INDIA...THERE ARE A NUMBER OF POLITICAL PARTIES
IN INDIA BUT THERE IS NONE THAT CAN TAKE THE PLACE OF THE
CONGRESS IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE." (IW)

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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9. YOUTH: IN DESCRIBING HIS EFFORTS TO REVITALIZE THE YOUTH CONGRESS: "THE YOUTH IN INDIA HAVE TREMENDOUS ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM. IF THIS ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM CAN BE CHANNELLISED TO DO CONSTRUCTIVE WORK, IT WOULD GIVE THE YOUTH A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT AND GO A LONG WAY IN THE TASK OF BUILDING THE NATION...THE YOUTH CONGRESS CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN CHANNELLISING THIS ENERGY." (IW)

10. PERSONAL: SANJAY DENIED HAVING ACQUIRED A POSITION OF INFLUENCE WITH HIS MOTHER SINCE THE EMERGENCY, CLAIMING "THERE IS NO CHANGE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY MOTHER SINCE THE EMERGENCY." (IW) HE SAID "I AM NEITHER A LEFTIST NOR A RIGHTIST. IF ANYTHING BENEFITS THE COUNTRY I AM FOR IT, BE IT LEFT OR RIGHT...I HAVE NO FUTURE PLANS. IF I CAN HELP TO REORGANIZE THE YOUTH CONGRESS, I WOULD LIKE TO DO IT. I HAVE NO PLANS BEYOND THAT. THIS IN ITSELF IS A BIG TASK." (IW) ASKED IF HE PLANNED TO GUARD "AGAINST THE SYCOPHANTS WHO SEEMED TO BE ANXIOUS TO GATHER AROUND YOU?," HE REPLIED: "I MEET A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE EVERY DAY. THEY ARE MOSTLY PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE DELHI AND THEREFORE I CAN'T SEE THE SAME PEOPLE REGULARLY. THIS MAKES GATHERING AROUND ME DIFFICULT. IF ANY SYCOPHANTS
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TURN UP, I ALWAYS TRY TO AVOID THEM." (IW)

11. MARUTI: NEARLY HALF OF THE "TIME" INTERVIEW WAS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSING A "NUTS AND BOLTS" HISTORY OF SANJAY'S SMALL CAR PROJECT. SANJAY SAID HE STILL FOUND SOME TIME TO SPEND AT THE FACTORY AND TOOK THE "TIME CORRESPONDENT FOR A RIDE IN HIS CONTROVERSIAL CAR.

12. COMMENT: BILL SMITH OF "TIME" FOUND SANJAY QUIET AND RATHER SHY, BUT IMPASSIONED ON SOME TOPICS. ON BALANCE HE WAS IMPRESSED BY SANJAY WHOM HE FOUND INTELLIGENT, QUICK, AND FLUENT IN HIS COMMENTS, BUT PROBABLY NOT VERY WELL READ AND WITH A LIMITED INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND. SMITH WAS THE FIRST WESTERN CORRESPONDENT TO BE GRANTED AN INTERVIEW BUT THINKS THERE WILL BE MORE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE INTERVIEW WAS GIVEN WITH NO OTHER INDIAN PRESENT AND WITHOUT ANY REQUIREMENT THAT IT BE APPROVED BEFORE RELEASE TO "TIME," ALTHOUGH SANJAY ASKED (AND WAS GIVEN) THE RIGHT TO APPROVE VERBATIM QUOTES TO BE ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. SMITH NOTED THAT SANJAY WAS POORLY INFORMED ON THE U.S.
NOTE: SANJAY SAID HE HAD VISITED THE US FOR A WEEK IN

THE MID-1960'S WHILE HE WAS WORKING AT ROLLS-ROYCE IN THE
UK.
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